

244 there is the striped mouse, Mus pulchellus Gray (abio III), which gnaws the nuts. A kind of black rot affects the nuts here and there during certain years. A number of caterpillar species which consume the leaves can scarcely be designated as actual pests. It

244 is probable that the black rot has led the women to the belief that

719 other women are capable of making their groundnuts sick and of raining them by means of "medicine." They try to counter this trick with a medicine consisting of the bones of the turtle, the elephant, the pig, and the gulf, which are burned to ashes and then crushed; it is scattered on the seeds before planting. Of the remaining medicines that are supposed to influence favorably the growth of groundnuts, the most important one consists of rubbing

the groundnuts with a specially prepared coloring made from red wood, ba-ayā'; accordingly, this medicine is called ba-ayā'.

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824 This red coloring (see Section 18, "Sexual Life") produces the desired results and fends off hostile intentions. Red is everywhere

• (12) the color of joy, growth, and reproduction. On the day the woman plants the groundnuts, she paints a line between her index finger and thumb with the "medicinal red" which will give her a lucky hand; or she draws a similar line on the upper surface of a tree stump and covers the stump with leaves, like a cap.

This is to say: "May you groundnuts blossom, grow, and thrive (the red color is for this) under such a protection (referring to the leaves); nobody will be able to do you any harm (referring to the medicine)." Furthermore, on the eve of sowing, the man usually

(13) sets a good example for the groundnuts "assembled" in the basket /91/ by performing coitus for their benefit. With this example he sends them on their way: "Multiply! (1)" Another

1. This is done even when the woman is menstruating, whereas sexual intercourse is otherwise avoided during this period.

In this case, as a medicinal act, sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman is supposed to be particularly good for the groundnuts, on condition that the woman "brings good luck (ayle)" (see Section 18, "Sexual Life").

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Aside from rubbing his skin with oil, the Pangwe likes to smear his body with dyes on certain occasions. For this purpose he uses red chiefly, more rarely white, and only exceptionally black. There are no other colors. Red is the color for joy,

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Fig. 146. Nuts of the oil palm are cracked open to extract the oil.

and white is the color for death and evil. From this, the occasions on which the colors are used will be apparent. On festive occasions, that is, dances, weddings, and birth celebrations, red is used, a color which sometimes (for instance, in the love dance) is enlivened by white suns and circles, which seldom

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322 appear in black. The natives also put lozenge-shaped /195/ spots (bend5[k] be ba, "lozenges from the redwood") on the skin, or they leave lozenge-shaped areas uncolored when they paint themselves red, in both cases with the help of a stencil, that is, a /Fig. 147 appears here in the original text/ leaf from which a lozenge-shaped piece has been cut out. On occasions of mourning and cult activities dedicated to the "Evil One," on the other hand, they wear white.

386 Red dye (bā III, esī) is obtained from the heart of the redwood tree *Pterocarpus soyauxii* Taub. (mvō' IV Fang, mvē IV Ntum), a Leguminosa. They prefer old trees that have fallen down and are already rotten on the outside. A piece of convenient size is knocked off, and using it as a scraper (nīā k-esī, IV) they rub it on the rubbing block (nīē-esī), which is the trunk, going back and forth and sprinkling fine sand on it from time to time. Once I saw the hunk of the Leguminosa *Pentaclethra macrophylla* Benth. (ebī' I), Figure 147, used as a scraper. When the nearest redwood tree is at so great a distance that it is impracticable to run to it whenever dye is needed, a small log and a scraper is taken to the hut in order to be able to produce the favored red dye at all times without any trouble. Very charming little vessels in the form of pots, troughs, plates, or stools are used as containers for the dye (Fig. 148). /Fig. 148 appears here in the original text. /

White dye(vūok IV) is obtained from the white clay of the same name, a kind of pottery clay which usually is darker. It is applied after being mixed with water. Black dye is prepared from crushed charcoal to which water is added (dye and charcoal, pī' I III).

#### 4. Decoration of the body.

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304 We recognized the adornment of the body with different objects as the expression of a purely esthetic urge; we recognized the desire to express personal moods as the motive for painting the body. /196/ On the other hand, religious reasons doubtless originally played a role in the constant alterations made on the body. This seems clear, for instance, with respect to the custom of making the teeth pointed and incising the body. These very

832 fumigated (Fig. 58), while the skulls with cold severity surveyed the situation, until they themselves had justice done to them, for they were carried in a dance around the love tree. Meanwhile, a number of the participants took red dye and with it drew a line on the bark of the love tree, observing that they themselves would like to look like this in the eyes of their beloved. Another one took black dye in addition to the red and first made a red line, saying, "In the eyes of the girl to which I shall go (he probably was not allowed to pronounce her name) I want to appear like this (red)"; then he drew a black line and added, "On the other hand, the girl shall see all others like this (black line)." We already know that red is the color of life, [822] of joy, and of light. Black here signifies its opposite, the unpleasant and ugly.

832 Finally, a small punishment was meted out to the ancestral  
769 skulls by sticking them in the above-mentioned draw traps set up around the tree and leaving them there until the next day. Such a punishment of the ancestors is very rare, and it is significant that it does not occur at the Malan but in connection with the love medicine, which is to be regarded as a degenerate form of the Malan. Then around the tree a great variety of other medicines were distributed, such as red dye and a piece from the loincloth of a mother-in-law. Among the Fang the genitals [826] themselves are supposed to be taken, these having been cut from the deceased mother-in-law. /162/ /Fig. 58 appears here in the original text/

832 On the forenoon of the second day of the festival about 25  
783 banana leaf vessels were set up in a row in the festive area and  
[4/5] filled with freshly fetched water. Into the first vessel the medicine man put a whole pile of bark pieces and leaves, all of them love medicines. The other vessels were treated in a more perfunctory fashion: only a few pieces of bark were placed in the second vessel, and in each of the following, only one; the last vessels did not get anything. The medicine man then sat down at the first vessel, blew into it with a pipe, whereupon a thick, [388] soap-like foam arose, which supposedly comes from the bark of [824] the Cylicodiscus gabunensis (Taub) Harms (edum), and then washed his face, first in this vessel and then in all the following

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- Sentence 9: agbūh zāngbwā' (seven antelopes)  
d'a ke a bē agbūh asiē'men (six).  
Sentence 10: agbūh mūōm (eight antelopes) d'a  
ke a bē agbūh zāngbwā' (seven).  
Sentence 11: agbūh ebū, (nine antelopes) d'a ke  
a bē agbūh mūōm (eight).  
Sentence 12: agbūh avū'm (ten antelopes) d'a ke  
a bē agbūh ebū, (nine).

[832]

Young lovers like to play the game with their girls, as may be surmised from the somewhat romantic text. Jokingly, the girl says that she will give herself only to the one who can go through the entire game without making a mistake.

#### The Memory Game (nkūk ondūle or endēle)

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This game is known only among the Fang and a number of adjoining Ntum kin groups, and it is supposedly indigenous. A flat staff with short, paired transverse extensions and vertically inserted knobs is used in the game. The end of the staff usually has a head carved on it (Fig. 113). Each pair of transverse extensions, along with the knob and the adjacent lower part of the staff, forms a segment on which eleven different points are designated for the answers (see Fig. 114).

The game may have developed from an older, simpler one in which the individual parts of the human body were enumerated. This notion is suggested by the designation of the staff as the body, of the carved end -- even when it is not a regular head -- as neck and head, by the tripartite arrangement of the transverse extensions -- absent in Figure 113 -- (corresponding to the upper arm, the

[822]  
[831]



Fig. 112. Stick with Pieces of Raffia used as Mnemonic Device in the Memory Game of the Dwarf Antelope. About one-fourth actual size.



Memory Game, nkuk-ondüle, made of Wood, Southern Ntumu Region. A little over one-fifth actual size.

Fig. 113

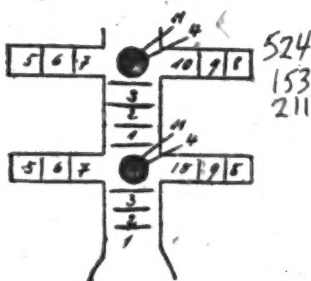


Fig. 114  
Two Sections of the Memory Game nkuk-ondüle.

lower arm, and the hand), and finally by the upright knob, called tsāngetswāge (the red one; red as the color of reproduction, of life), by which originally the male sex organ was doubtless understood. The implement is thus unquestionably supposed to represent a human body whose members are multiplied. [822] [631]

The game is played by two people, one questioning, the other answering. The former, seated in the circle of listeners, holds the implement in his hand and indicates the various points that /309/ must be answered. At each one he calls out: "zē zē? = What is that?" (phonetically assimilated and corrupted from dzē dzē). The principal player sits farther away and answers the questions in rhythmic song while the others stamp their feet or clap their hands in time. He is, of course, not allowed to make any marks to aid his memory, such as dividing a little stick into the corresponding number of sections. This is brainwork. [533]

The 11 questions, which are the same for each segment, go as follows:

1, 2, 3. (see the corresponding numbers in Fig. 114)

nkūk ondüle wō'le.

Body (of the) ondüle here. That is the body of the ondüle.

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superhuman heroes, who include not only their ancestors but also the earliest well-known Europeans: Ngôto Zambe (Rev. Good), Mendômô (Hauptmann von Hagen), Akôk (Marius Pascalet), etc., thus are found to be naturalized as it were and incorporated into tradition.

Driven out of this country by red giants (or by a red giant), the ancestors, fleeing to save their lives, were brought to a standstill at the Sanaga, incapable of crossing it until the intervention of the guardian of the waters, a python according to Beti and Boulou, a crocodile according to /16/ the Fang (1). By stretching himself across

1. Bertaut gives the names as mot yom and nga medja or ngan-meja. Discounting a mistake in transcription, these expressions could mean "a being to be supplicated," "crocodile to be supplicated," "from môt (Fang, \*môr, mur) = person; ngan = crocodile; ja'é (Boulou) dzak, dzaghe (Ewondo, Fang) = to ask, to supplicate; yom = to beg, to implore.

the river this animal formed a bridge which the ancestors crossed family by family, in order of primogeniture, until the moment when a child (or woman) wounded the animal's back by letting fall a weapon (or a torch). The animal dived below, abandoning on the right bank the Beti group that is still there today.

103 Osoe Nnanga, whence Europeans have derived "Sanaga," means  
022 "white river" or "river of the albino." White is the color of death;  
824 ghosts (bekôn) are white; albinos are thought to be offspring of incubi.

775 Lastly, the land of the dead has always been situated in the west, toward the sea (man), even though the Pahouin could not have known the sea except by hearsay. Considered in connection with some of the legends collected by Trilles, these facts may lead us to think that the Pahouin in crossing the Sanaga were entering, at least symbolically, the land of the dead.

When they had reached the left bank, they found their road blocked by an impenetrable forest, with the single path obstructed by an

772 water; dim = to terminate, to extinguish, to sink (in connection with  
 123 a star); dimi = to get lost; dip = to close; dibi = dark, opaque. (According to Trezenem, the world is surrounded by the river éndam, a word related to ndam = width, wide.) The darkness of the east is black (cf. the name of the land of origin, mvô' ékanga = country of high white clouds; low dark rain clouds are minkut); the darkness of the west is white, the feminine color, white, moreover, being the color of mourning and death. The bekôn are white, at least those that remain on earth; those admitted to Zambe's village are red.

In relation to the east-west axis, north is on the right, mbo nnôm, male side, south is on the left, mbo ngal, female side. The dividing line between north and south is the Sanaga (Osôé Nnanga = white river, river of the albinos) crossed by the python, mvôm, who is also the rainbow (though a Fang tradition in eastern Gabon mentions a river, the Evindi, that is, "black"). North is connected with red (1), the

[822]

1. Evindi, éfumulu, and évele, "black," "white," and "red," are the only names of colors in the language. They are applied to the near shades: a grey is "white" or "black," a blue or green is "black," ochre or light brown is "red," light yellow is "white," etc. For greater exactness, similes are used — zo'obon, "aquatic moss," for green, jôp, "sun," "egg yolk," for orange or yellow — or loan words like "blue."

masculine /115/ and festival color. South is also noon, midday, zane mos, and the zenith, yôbe jôp (yôp = sky, high, height; jôp sun, in Fang, dzô); it is the side of light, vian, sunlight, or éfufup, brightness.

[821]

The sky, yôp, seems to be supported by an iron post (akoñ = post or spear, a masculine symbol) held by the sister-wife of Zambe, Nyingon Mebe'e. The sky appears both masculine and feminine, like the earth; the sun is masculine, the moon feminine.

Thus we come to define two opposing directions or sectors on the compass card: the N/E quadrant is male; the S/W quadrant is female — the two others seem to be neuter. The NE-SW diameter bisects

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one thereby becomes incorporated in him and in the tribe. Finally, the taboo surrounding this organ of the body, to which the origin of circumcision may be traced -- either because of the social function of the organ or of the danger of its premature use, or even because of its independence of volition -- allows circumcision to be considered as a desecration that has to precede the stage of virility, in order that use may be made of it. (2)

2. Bros, Religion des peuples non-civilisés [Religion of Non-civilized Peoples], "Circoncision" [Circumcision].

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[844]

Some of these statements hold good for the Fan; some are less applicable. Let me use as an example one of the things that illustrates very well the close connection between circumcision as a religious rite and childbirth rituals, the fact that pieces of cloth used to staunch blood are in both cases carefully kept to be used for the same purpose. [520]

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Ordinary warriors place them with their personal totem in the mfe or pineapple-fiber bag which never leaves them. These pieces of cloth, or fragments of them, are always part of totemic sacrifices. The sons of chiefs, on the contrary, are not allowed to keep them; they bury them deep at the base of the sacred fig tree planted when they were born over the remains of the umbilical cord. This custom certainly goes back to remote antiquity. Among the Egyptians, the fig tree was considered sacred and dedicated to the Egyptian Venus, Hathor. From this perhaps comes the word éthu, designating a garment made from the bast of the fig tree. The same word, éthu, has remained in the Fan language with the same meaning, "garment," and the inland Fan always make vegetable-fiber cloth from the fig tree, which they still dye red; this was formerly the color dedicated to Hathor, and it has remained the color of betrothal garments. For the same reason, before marriage, young men and women stain themselves red from head to foot. It is a color "set apart."

361 the sites of future huts with blood. The hen is then opened up  
 621 and divided among the principal warriors and the chief's relatives.  
 769 This strictly, speaking, constitutes the totemic sacrifice. The  
 782 kid or sheep is then offered to the spirits of departed souls and to  
 the ancestors.

After the sacrifice to ancestors the chief puts the akameyón  
 361 back at his side. From the mfex or pouch, which is never re-  
 621 moved, he draws forth a small bundle of dirty material wrapped  
 769 around a bit of red wood, ashes, and a few bones. All this  
 778 comes from a sacrifice to the totem like that already described.  
 To these he adds the remnants of the recent sacrifice and buries  
 [824] it all deep in a hole in which he drives a strong stake of élun  
 or éfirfira wood; sometimes a young ebony tree is also used.  
 822 At the top of the stake he fixes a ball of paste made of red wood,  
 842 white chalk -- the colors of sacrifices and spirits, and manioc,  
 the symbol of fertility. A part of the clan or tribal totem is  
 also inserted. The practitioner, with many gestures, songs,  
 and dances imprisons within it all the evil spirits of the air.  
 [558]

The practitioner sows maize in the middle of the village,  
 then plants a manioc root and particularly a euphorbia (euphorbia  
antiquorum), and puts a small fence around, so that the plants  
 [787] will not be desecrated. The village's prosperity depends upon their  
 rapid growth. Should they wither, the chosen spot will be  
 abandoned. Euphorbia has the power of averting thunder and evil  
 [824] spirits by means of its bristling points. Amaryllis and  
 immortelles are often planted at the foot of the euphorbia, along  
 with a few stalks of sugar cane. The amaryllis and immortelles  
 ought to come from the old village, having issued from those  
 which the chief's first wife had formerly brought from her  
 [842] native village at her marriage. Sugar cane is a symbol of  
 fertility.

241 The women plant maize everywhere after these prelimi-  
 361 naries, and its rapid growth ensures basic subsistence. Mean-  
 while the men build the huts. The first ears of maize will  
 certainly be offered to the guardian totem. Dried and preserved  
 in the form of a coronet, they will provide seed for the following  
 year.